

REMARKS

The Examiner in the Official Action rejected claims 1-22 for the reasons set forth therein. By this amendment, only independent claim 22 is remaining. The Examiner in paragraph 7 of the Official Action rejected claim 22 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abt et al. and in view of Onishi and Erickson and further in view of Masato et al. for the reasons set forth therein.

Claim 22 is directed to a kit for producing an official postal product as illustrated in Figs. 9a-9e. As can be seen there is provided a first sheet such as illustrated in Figs. 9c and 9d wherein there is provided an official postal product having a first official image area 24 and an area 50 designated for the placement of a personal image which had been printed separately in the form of a sheet 360. Each of the individual personal images 41 is peeled from the sheet 350 and is adhered directly to the official stamp in the designated area 50. Each of the personal images have a protected coating thereon such that an official postal cancellation mark will not be permanently adhered to the personal image. It is respectfully submitted that neither of the references individually, or in combination teach or suggest the invention as taught and claimed by applicants.

The '768 reference to Abt et al. is directed to an apparatus and method for simultaneously perforating and cutting a lift sheet material having multiple layers. There is no teaching or suggestion of providing a first sheet having an area for receiving a personal image as taught and claimed by applicant. Quite the contrary, the Abt et al. reference is simply directed to a cutting device for cutting out various products such as stamps, tickets. These are not official postage stamps or stamps designed to receive an official image as taught and claimed by applicants. Even if somehow the stamps of Abt et al. were as construed by the Examiner, Abt et al. does not teach or suggest that the official postal product have an area for receiving a personal image. Nor does it teach that the personal image have a protective coating thereon that prevents an official postal cancellation mark from being permanently adhered thereto.

The Examiner further cites and issues that discloses the sheet 12 having a plurality of labels as illustrated in Fig. 12, each having a personal image. The Examiner then goes on to state "Therefore, it would have been obvious to one

having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Abt's invention to include a second sheet of labels having a personal image, as taught by Onishi, since doing so would provide an additional sheet of adhesive-backed, removable shapes that may be personalized." Applicants respectfully submits that the Examiner is using hind-sight in an attempt to piece mail applicants invention. There is no motivation or suggestion in Onishi to provide a second sheet or provide personal images having a protective coating that as set forth by independent claim 22 which is to be used in combination with the sheet. The Onishi reference merely teaches a sheet-like printing medium with easy separable means which enables one to easily separate the printing medium into separate portions. It does not teach or suggest that these separate portions are to be applied or used with any other item nor does it teach or suggest that they have a protective coating for preventing the imprinting of a cancellation mark as taught and claimed by applicants. Furthermore, in order to combine references, there must be some motivation or suggestion to do so. The Abt et al. reference and the Onishi reference are directed to two totally apart and distinct technologies. The Abt et al. is simply directed to a cutting apparatus for cutting shapes in a media whereas Onishi is directed to providing a media having separation means. There would be no motivation or suggestion to combine one with the other. Further, even when combined, they could not teach or suggest the invention as taught and claimed by applicants for the reasons set forth above.

The Examiner also cites the Erickson reference as disclosing placing a transparent label over a stamp receiving surface and therefore would have been obvious to modify Abt's et al. invention to include the placement of the label over the official postal product as taught by Erickson to provide a protective coating for the postal product. Applicants respectfully submit that there is no teaching or suggestion to provide the combination as suggested by the Examiner. With respect to the Erickson reference, this is directed to a sheet of transparent material to which suitable pigments which constitute the design or other matter of the stamp or label are applied partly in a permanent relationship with a transparent sheet and partly in removable or transferable relationship therewith. See column lines 35-40. It can be seen by the drawings that the transparent sheet 2 includes a part of the design of coating 4 of printers ink. Thus, there is provided an initial

printing 4 on which a transparent media which has a design thereon. See lines 74-75, see also Figs. 5 and 6 which shows the pigment 2 in combination with the pigment 4. There is no teaching or suggestion for providing a protective coating to a personal image. The Erickson reference is simply directed to providing a transparent sheet allowing a portion of an image to be viewed thereof. In Erickson, ink areas 2 and 4 are on two separate layers and are combined to form the final pattern as illustrated by Fig. 1. This is totally apart and distinct from the present invention and a combination of the two cited references is not taught or suggested nor would it be obvious how one would combine these references.

Finally the Masato et al. reference does not teach or suggest the invention as it fails to teach or suggest a kit having two separate sheets wherein one of the sheets has personal images designed for placement in a designated area as taught and claimed by applicants.

The summary of the invention has been amended to correspond to the claim presently on file.

In view of the foregoing applicant respectfully submits that the prior art either individually or in combination does not teach or suggest the invention set forth in the pending claims.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page(s) is captioned **"Version with Markings to Show Changes Made"**.

Respectfully submitted,



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Version With Markings to Show Changes Made

In the Specification:

The paragraph beginning on page 3, line 9 has been amended as set forth below:

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention there is provided a kit for producing an official postal product having a personal image. The kit is comprised of a first sheet having a plurality official postal products each of the products having a first official image area having an official postal indicia and a second area for receiving a personal image. A second sheet having a plurality of labels each having a personal image thereon. Each of the labels having a personal image being adapted to place in the second area of the official postal product, each of the labels having a protective coating thereon such that an official postal cancellation mark will not be permanently adhered to said personal image. ~~an official postal product comprised of a first image area having an official postal indicia a second image area having a personal image. A protective coating is placed over the second image area such that official cancellation mark placed over the second area will not permanently adhere to the personal image.~~

Please delete the paragraphs starting on page 3, lines 14-30; page 4, lines 1-30; and page 5, lines 1-16.

In the Claims:

Claims 1-21 have been cancelled.

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